Meal of a Lifetime

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“Being educated means being open minded. It means being open to new opportunities, new situations, people, and not putting judgment on something because of preconceived notions. To be an educated person is to be someone who can take what they have learned through all experiences, and apply it to any place in their life, or someone else's life. For me, being educated is putting forth the effort to try to understand everything that may come my way, and learning what I can from anything and everything I'm exposed to. Education is to always push the limits, and reach for more.”

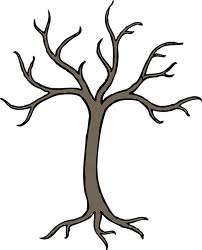
“I can remember how the butterflies felt every time I took the stage. That feeling when my body felt like it was someplace else. It was summer, and that meant fiddle contest season. You could say I was a seasoned professional because I had been competing since I was seven (I was now twelve), and playing the violin since I was five. The contest started out as it always had, my violin instructor, Mrs. Thomas, relaying the rules for all participants and audience members. The junior division was up first, so I had some time to just sit and enjoy the show because I was not until the second division, teens. I remember when I saw the blonde haired, bright eyed, smiling little girl walking around holding what could be mistaken for a toy violin. I could tell this was her first contest because I recognized the look of awe, wonder, excitement, and nervousness all wrapped up in one. When she took the stage, I watched her play like she was the seasoned professional, and I was the newbie. She played smoothly, beautifully, and captivated every audience member’s attention. My butterflies kicked in even more after I watched that little girl play, because I felt like I had to prove I can play just as well as she can, or even better. When I took to the stage, I played like I always had; one song at a time, one note at a time, and feeling the music every step of the way. When I was finished, everyone cheered and clapped, and Mrs. Thomas gave me a look of encouragement. I felt like I had played exactly how I wanted. When the competition was over, and the judges were trying to quickly tabulate the scores to determine the winners, that same little blonde haired girl came walking very meekly over to me. She smiled up at me and told me something I never expected to hear. She said “You were amazing! I really hope I can sound like you someday.” Me? She thought I was so amazing that she wanted to sound like me? I was shocked, and honored that a little girl would look up to me in that way. I was only twelve years old; a place in my life that I felt I had done nothing important enough to gain attention like this little girl had given me. I told her to just keep playing like she is and she’ll be playing and sounding like me in no time. I also said it takes practice and discipline to achieve what your goal is, so just keep working at it and don’t give up. Always do what you want and be exactly what you imagine yourself to be.” This little never new that it was truly me that looked up to her. When I watched how well she played that day, I wanted to set my goals higher and be better than I ever imagined.

*Appetizers*

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Entrée

“I dislike my job. Or better yet, I dislike being overwhelmed, and as a waitress, being overwhelmed is part of the job. When I am working my shift I need to maintain a smile, be cheery and happy, wait on multiple tables, take multiple orders for drinks and meals, get all of those orders correct, keep everyone happy by checking in on them from time to time, give them the correct bill with the correct orders on them, and clean and reset the tables. It is not the easiest of jobs, but I need to make money for school. Sometimes by the middle of my shift I have had enough. I can remember being two seconds from walking out the door and never looking back. One of these nights was when I waited on an older couple that changed my outlook on my future. I was being overwhelmed as usual, going crazy from all of the customers, when I was seated with a two top, (two people at a table). They were an older couple, a man and a woman, and they had obviously spent many happy years married to each other. The man was so quiet, letting his wife do most of the talking, which she was completely fine with. She talked about anything and everything, vulgar or not. It was entertaining to listen to their stories, but I also had other tables and I was neglecting them. Upon one of the last times I was going to visit their table, the man asked if I was just working a summer job. I responded with yes of course, and they both replied with the same answer. “Good! No one should want to work this job all their life! Haha I wouldn’t be able to. You need to keep working hard so you can get out of there, and starting making the big bucks. Right now, this money is good for now, but later, later you’ll need to move on and do better.” They asked what my major was and I told them Secondary Education Mathematics, and they both thought that was just great. The woman told me about how she used to be a teacher, and how rewarding it was. They left me with one final thought before they took their bill and I never saw them again. “Always do what you want and do it as well as you can. Don’t accept anything less. It’s good you’re starting here working, so you can appreciate where you end up later.” Again I was left with the feeling of wanting to achieve more and set my goals higher than before.



*Dessert*

“When I think about my future, I think of a tree constantly growing, adding branches, and leaves. The tree is representing how far I've come and how much I've grown in my life. It shows how I'm "branching" out, adding people into my life, experiences, and even representing my family tree. I want to take everything I have learned and the experiences that have helped my tree grow, and pass it on to all of the tiny seeds that are still in the ground. As a future teacher, I want to help my own future children, and future students to grow into their own successful and well-rounded tree. It takes many years for a tree to grow, and it's always continuously growing, just as I feel I am. I'm constantly growing from all of the opportunities I come into contact with, and being open to learning and being educated from more than just in the classroom. I want to look back on my experience with the little blonde girl from the fiddle contest and the older couple from the restaurant and always remember how I can achieve more than what I thought, and to always be bigger, better, and reach for more than I ever that was possible. I want to continue growing and changing, and educating myself through life.”



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*“Keep growing and keep changing”*